

Living out our Discipleship this Week at Home

Based on the lectionary reading for this week

Compiled by Rev Linda Driver, Athelstone Uniting Church from Seasons of the Spirit resources.

July 11, 2021 – *Lavishing Grace*

Lectionary Readings for this Week

Mark 6:14-29 Psalm 24 2 Samuel 6:1–5, 12b–19 **Ephesians 1:1–14** the focus for this week

Read

Ephesians 1:1-14 in your Bible. You might also like to read **Reading Someone Else's Mail** over the page

Something to think about, talk about or do

The writer of the letter to the Ephesians tries to put into words the glorious plan God has for the whole world. It describes a time when all of heaven and Earth will unite in celebration of God's glory. Out of unconditional love for us, God has sent both Jesus and the Holy Spirit to guide us into a close relationship with God.

Together this week, plan a festive meal to celebrate the presence of God in your life. Involve everyone in the preparation.

Prayer

God of joy,
we give thanks that you are always with us.
Help us to remember and celebrate your presence
every day.
Amen.

Don't forget the daily readings in the Ephesians resource!

Reading Someone Else's Mail

Based on Ephesians 1:3–14

Many scholars assume the author of this letter was someone other than the apostle Paul, although it still appears to convey his thoughts and theology. For the flow of this story, we have used the name "Paul."

Have you ever received a letter in the mail, or maybe a birthday card?

It is so much fun to go to the mailbox and reach in to pull out a handful of envelopes. When you realize one is written to you, there is so much joy! It is even better when the note is sent to you by one of your favourite people. I wonder if that is how the people in Ephesus felt when they received their letter from one of the early church leaders.

Our scripture today is from a letter to the churches in Ephesus and surrounding area. This letter was meant to be read out loud to everyone that could hear it. The message wasn't just a check-in – a "how are you doing" – letter; no, it was a letter about God.

The letter was written by Paul, who had some amazing things to tell them. This letter told that even before time began God loved all people, no matter who they were. This was important for the people in Bible times to hear; rumours were going around that God only loved the Jews enough to include them in God's family. This was hurtful to the people in Ephesus because most of them were not Jewish but were Gentiles. When Paul told them that God loved them, it was extra special. Paul compared it to adoption. Adoption is when someone becomes part of your family; they even change their names to be like your last name. The letter told that through Jesus, these early Christians were adopted in God's family. How amazing is that?

Here is something amazing, this letter to the Ephesians is for us, too. It might seem like we are reading someone else's mail and that it isn't meant for us, but it *is* meant for us! It is included in the Bible because God wants us to know that we are part of God's family, too.

I am so thankful, and I hope you are too!

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